

Letter from George O. Goodhue to Annie M. Sullivan, from April 13, 1894 to April 14, 1894, with transcript

Heading Geo O. Goodhue Danville PQ, Canada Copy Danville, P.Q., 13 April, 1894. My
Dear Miss Sullivan:

As I explained in a hasty note to you written early this morning, while waiting for the homeward train at Newport, Vt., I refrained from writing you while in Boston, as kind Mrs. Pratt told me she was keeping you thoroughly posted.

When I first saw Mr. Spaulding in his office, now just a week ago, I found him quite busy, but pleasant and kindly. He explained what he had already done for Helen's father, as well as for herself, but did not seem to have had any special thought as to provision for Helen's future. On Monday I had my first good long talk with him, and explained the plan to which I had given a good deal of thought. It was briefly this: first, to ascertain the amount required each year for five years to come for Helen and you as her teacher and friend, then allow a good margin, and then let the friends who we think would consider it a privilege to do so have the chance to help us make up this amount, with the understanding that it is to be continued for five years, or as much longer as may be necessary. Should the amount thus raised be more than sufficient for the purposes designed, the proposition is to make any surplus the nucleus of a permanent fund.

I was glad, indeed, to see how heartily he entered into the scheme as soon as I explained it, and more than pleased to see that he resents as much as I do the idea that there is any charity about it—if I at all understand him right, any one who he does not think will consider it both a pleasure and a privilege to have a share in this matter will not be asked, and the number required in all he does not think will be many. This, in brief, is the plan as it now stands, and which I would have been glad to have seen carried 2 through to completion while I was in Boston, but there were a good many questions that neither he

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nor I, nor Mrs. Pratt, could answer, such as the amount required, where Helen should go to school, the expenses there, &c., &c., and Mr. Spaulding is no doubt right in considering it best to have all these details settled before completing the matter, and the friend upon whom he most depends to help settle all these details is Mrs. Hopkins, who I hope may not have left you before this letter arrives. He also mentioned a Miss Derby, and spoke of other ladies whom he would see after first having had a good conference with Mrs. Hopkins, after which he intends personally to quietly invite some of Helen's friends to help complete the financial part of the plan. Had Mrs. Hopkins returned to Boston this week, it was Mr. Spaulding's idea that we should consult with her and then go right on with it.

On learning on Wednesday through telegram from Hon. Mr. Hitz to Mrs. Pratt—who I was very glad to meet, and who has been very kind and helpful throughout—that she (Mrs. Hopkins) was not expected in Washington before 18th inst., Mr. Spaulding decided it was wisest to let the matter stand in its present position until her return to Boston. I told him what I was prepared to do in aid of the plan and only wished I could do more, and as to enlisting Helen's other friends in it, I fully realized from the first that both he and Mr. Bell, for obvious reasons, could do far, far more than I, and while more than pleased to now see the matter in such wise, strong hands as his, I was ready to do anything I could to aid him. He thought it would not be necessary for me to return to Boston, as he would see the friends himself when the plan was completed and had no fears as to the result, so you may be sure I feel very much pleased with the prospect.

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April 14.

I was interrupted last night and unable to finish this letter. I saw Mr. Spaulding every day this week, except Tuesday, up to Thursday afternoon, and went over all the points I could think of.

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He thinks, with me, that Helen should be kept from the public as much as it is possible, at least for a time. Perhaps I feel too strongly about this, as I have seen so very little of her, and, therefore, do not really know , but it does seem to me to be of very high importance for Helen's best good. Her development has in every way been so miraculous almost, that were she anybody but her own sweet self , she would surely been injured by the public attention showered upon her. Few, it seems to me, could stand without injury, even in maturer years, one-half of the just meed of praise and appreciation that are due to the wonderful gifts and charming disposition of our dear little sister.

I saw Mr. Anagnos twice and had a very pleasant visit with him each time, dining with him on my second visit. He evidently retains all his old-time interest and affection for Helen. I would have mentioned our plan to him, but as Mr. Spaulding had said he thought it best for us not to mention it to any one until after Mrs. Hopkins' return, I did not do so. At the time of my first visit, I questioned him closely as to what kind of a school he thought was now most suitable for Helen. I expected to find him anxious to get her back to his institution, but while he no doubt would be glad to have her there, he said he thought a quieter place where the public could not see her so much would be much better for her, at least for some time. He said, if he was to have her again, he would just prevent the public from seeing her as much as they had done when she was there before. At that time, of course, neither he nor any one else was prepared for such a wonder and marvel. He thought a quieter place than Boston preferable, but that if in Boston the higher kindergarten school of those instituted by Mrs. Shaw would be the most suitable to her, or perhaps what he said was that it would be very useful to her. He lays great stress upon the advisability that she should be taught as much as possible by the Froebel system rather than by the study of text-books, as her mind is so wonderful that she will retain almost anything indefinitely on hearing it read but once or twice, and what is wanted is to develop her own talents and originality, and he considers the Froebel system especially suited to her. He thought her being at a quiet place like Mr. Wade's this winter a very fine thing for her, and spoke in the very highest terms of Mr. Wade's kindness. His ideas throughout seemed to me to very

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sensible, and given in what he really considered to be Helen's own interest. He did not make special reference to yourself, but, on the other hand, there was no intimation in any way but that every thing was perfectly pleasant between you. I was more sorry than I can say to learn from Mrs. Pratt of the unpleasant feeling existing between Mr. Anagnos and yourself. There may be other and more serious reasons of which I know nothing which may bar a reconciliation, but while not in anywise belittling the unkind treatment to which you were subjected by him in connection with dear Helen's "Frost King," I do earnestly hope for Helen's sake, as well as for your own happiness, that, with a conciliatory spirit on both sides, time may speedily wear away the rough edges of this unfortunate matter, until not a vestige of it shall remain to trouble anybody. Dear Miss Canby's charming treatment of the whole matter was such a delight to me that I cannot but still trust that a beautiful silver lining will soon light up this part of that unpleasant 5 cloud.

I hope your eyes are much better. When they will permit, please let me know what kind of a school you would prefer for Helen, and where you think would be the best place for to be, whether Boston or elsewhere. The reason why I am anxious this letter should reach you before Mrs. Hopkins' departure is, of course, that you should impress upon her your ideas as to what is best for Helen, for I feel there is no one more competent to judge, as you know her so much more intimately than even her own parents, who I trust may be pleased with what some of Helen's brothers are desirous of doing to show their love to their dear little sister.

Please give her my love and tell her I will write her before long about my pleasant visit to the kindergarten to see little Tommy and pretty Willie Robin, and the rest.

Very Sincerely Your Friend, Geo. O. Goodhue.